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Peace and Conflict Resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa: How Efficient Does the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Achieve these Aims?

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Abstract		Original Research Article

Wars and armed conflict continue to be a consistent impediment to the growth and development of warring states and bring with them untold human suffering and much destruction in their wake. This is also true for wars in Africa including the five major Civil wars in Africa being, the Nigerian Civil War (Biafra War) (1967), the Somali Civil War (1991), the Rwandan Genocide (1994), the Second Congo War (considered "Africa's World War") (1998-2003), the Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972), (1983-2005) (2023-present), and the Eritrean-Ethiopian War (1998). Given the devastating effects of war, the early detection, prevention and mitigation of such conflict as well as post-conflict reconstruction is a major concern for governments and international actors, including the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The importance of peace building and conflict resolution is therefore amply recognized across the regional and international spectra, hence its incorporation into global agencies and regional agencies including the World Bank and the United Nations, and regionally through the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The African Union, being the umbrella body that encompasses 55 African countries into its membership divided into five regions being Central Africa region, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa, holds a large presence in matters African politics, and given its expansive reach has partnered with other organizations, majorly the United Nations (UN) with the view of partnering in peace building and conflict resolution. This has been achieved through putting in place several frameworks, including the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2018), Agenda 2063, the AU Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy framework, and the extended AU's Silencing the Guns Initiative. The work and expertise of regional organizations in maintaining peace and stability in Africa, and specific regions, and has in that regard held consultative engagements and addressed current and emerging threats to peace and security and peace building in Africa.

Keywords: Peace building, conflict resolution, African Union (AU), political, civil war, NEPAD, International relations, regional organizations.

INTRODUCTION

All nations contend that peace and stability is a cornerstone of the social, economic and political development of their respective nations. When a peace agreement is signed to end the tumult of civil war this is often lauded as a triumph of conflict resolution and it is hoped this achievement will be the first step in a journey towards a peaceful future. However, the signatures fixed to these documents have little meaning if the parties to the conflict are unable to commit to its implementation once the spotlight of the international community has faded. Civil war peace agreements in particular are notoriously fragile and prone to violent relapse (DeRouen and Bercovitch 2008). Presently, nations seek to develop or extend their influence beyond their borders. Specifically, China has been on a charm offensive to extend its influence in all parts of the world through the application of the China Belt Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI seeks to extend the influence of China in a region such as Africa, where the country is now involved in massive development projects. It is a development program that aims at connecting maritime and overland trade between China and other parts of the world through

maritime connection and overland trade. Apart from this, its objective is to strengthen the political, economic and cultural interactions. Notwithstanding, China appreciates the fact that the country its objectives may be hampered by the presence of conflicts or absence of peace in the targeted areas. Currently, nations agree that they cannot achieve this objective because of the lack of peace or the existence of conflicts within and outside their borders. East African and the Horn of Africa has come into great focus as they are amongst the most conflicted and unstable regions of the world [1].

BACKGROUND

Since the 1990s, nations in East Africa and the Horn of Africa such as Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti have experienced systematic wars and conflicts that threaten the very existence of these countries. Particularly, Somalia has been considered as a flashpoint for a continuing war that continues to date. However, the conflicts and wars in these areas were often resolved through national or local initiatives by the nations. Since 1990s, the establishment of peace and conflict resolution in these regions has been transformed along mechanisms to strengthen regional and continental institutions to intervene in the domestic affairs of the member states [2]. This a decisive departure from the past when African institutions had limited roles in the interventions. Currently, there is a widely held belief that African institutions can assist in ensuring that peace is maintained in these countries. Similarly, these institutions are now charged with resolving conflicts that may arise at any given point in life of the affected nations.

The African Union (AU) and its agency, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has played a critical role in enhancing development, promotion of peace and resolving conflicts in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. The AU specifically articulated and defined policies that commit to underwrite peacebuilding initiatives such as the African Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) [3], policy as well as the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that have enabled the AU to intervene in several conflict areas and support sustainable peace and development. Therefore, the AU is a critical actor in peacebuilding initiatives even though it has not achieved the expected levels of success. This is because it has faced the challenge of limited resources, capacity and expertise to be effective in the peacebuilding initiatives. Besides, the peacebuilding environment is replete with multiple actors and interests that the AU cannot sufficiently manage or attain.

In the recent years, the above constraints that AU and by extension the NEPAD faces have been compounded by the resurgence of conflicts in many countries that had previously benefited from peacebuilding interventions. This has in effect reduced the consensus about the impact of peacebuilding while at the same time making some conflicts to become even worse. In this context, peacebuilding entails the measures that are used to reduce the risk of lapsing and relapsing into conflict. This is done by strengthening the national capacities at all levels that are used in managing conflicts as well as setting the foundation for sustainable peace or development. However, the peacebuilding initiatives must be coherent and aligned to the particular needs of the concerned country and based on national ownership [4]. It must also comprise a carefully prioritized, ordered and limited objectives aimed at obtaining the objective.

Research Question

This research study addresses how efficient the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) assist in ensuring peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

The specific research questions will be.
1. What is the meaning of peace and conflict resolution in the context of international relations?
2. What is the role of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa?
3. Has the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) effectively succeeded in ensuring peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa?
4. What is the future of these institutions in ensuring peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa?

Research Objectives
The research objectives are:
➢ To establish the meaning of peace and conflict resolution in the context of international relations.

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1 Redie Bereketeab, *The Horn of Africa: Intra-State and Inter-State Conflicts and Security*, *JSTOR* (Pluto Press, 2013), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183p650.
2 Gilbert M. Khadiagala, "The African Union in Peacebuilding in Africa," *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa*, November 3, 2020, 197–213, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7_12.

3 Siphamandla Zondi, "African Union Approaches to Peacebuilding - World," ReliefWeb, 2017, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/african-union-approaches-peacebuilding.
4 Vincent Ghetail, *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: A Lexicon* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

- To evaluate the role of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.
- To establish whether the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) effectively succeeded in ensuring peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa?
- To discuss the future of these institutions in ensuring peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 2002 AU Constitutive Act has provisions that define the role of the AU in peacebuilding and reconstruction after conflicts [5]. While the AU holds that member states have their sovereignty, it also affirms that it reserves the right to intervene in the affairs of member states according to the provisions of Article 4 (h) [6]. This applies in cases where there are grave circumstances such as genocide and crimes against humanity as well as wars. Further, Article 30 provides that the AU has an obligation to impose sanctions on any member state whenever it is necessary such as the unconstitutional change of government. These are the articles that cover the principle of non-indifference, which justifies the role of the AU in building peace as well as reconstruction after conflicts. Generally, since its formation, the AU has become a major player in security and stability initiatives in many parts of Africa [7].

In pursuing the common approaches to challenges within the African continent, the AU has established two institutions for building peace and post-conflict reconstruction. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) consists of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) that carries out the responsibility of promotion of peace, security and stability. It also anticipates conflicts and undertakes preventive diplomacy while at the same time maintaining peace through conciliation and mediation. The PSC also possesses other responsibilities including peacebuilding and reconstruction of these nations after the conflicts.

Besides, the APSA also has a Continental Early Warning System for prevention of conflicts and the African Standby Force (ASF) for the purpose of peacekeeping and support other peace support initiatives [8].

Even though the AU was created as the main institution that is charged with peace and security in the continent, the peacebuilding functions and the constraints that it faces are supported by regional, continental and multilateral institutions [9]. Critically, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has emerged as a crucial program that the AU uses to handle social, economic and political factors that contribute to wars, conflicts and instability in different parts of the African continent. NEPAD also supports post-conflict reconstruction by mobilizing resources for the AU Peace Fund. It is engaged by the AU on peace and security issues because of the proximity of these countries that are engaged in conflicts such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, South Sudan and Somalia amongst others.

However, the involvement of multiple actors in the peacebuilding initiatives in Africa has made the AU to be faced with a competitive and crowded environment that has opportunities as well as constraints. As it has increasingly defined its peacebuilding role, the AU has begun to acknowledge the significance of establishing relationships with organizations such as NEPAD for it to be effective [10]. As a new institution in an area where it has limited experience or positioning, the AU still grapples with questions on the division of labor between it and other institutions. These challenges are even more worsened with regards to AU's relationship with bilateral and multilateral donors such as China that are often mired in competition and complementarity. As such, decisions about the time and manner in which the AU engages with international donors in peacebuilding depends on the comparative strengths and resources that it can offer in the post-conflict contexts.

Before the establishment of the AU, there were two dominant trends that were found in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction [11]. The first is

5 Paul D. Williams, "The Peace and Security Council of the African Union: Evaluating an Embryonic International Institution," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, no. 4 (November 12, 2009): 603–26, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022278x09990048.

6 Dan Kuwali and Frans Viljoen, *Africa and the Responsibility to Protect: Article 4(H) of the African Union Constitutive Act* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013).

7 Gilbert M. Khadiagala, "The African Union in Peacebuilding in Africa," *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa*, November 3, 2020, 197–213, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7_12.

8 Samuel M Makinda and F Wafula Okumu, *The African Union: Challenges of Globalization, Security, and Governance* (New York, Ny: Routledge, 2010).

9 Theo Neethling and Heidi Hudson, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa: Concepts, Role-Players, Policy and Practice* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2013).

10 Shannon Ebrahim, *Peace in Africa: Towards a Collaborative Security Regime* (Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2004).

11 Giulia Piccolino, "Local Peacebuilding in a Victor's Peace. Why Local Peace Fails without National Reconciliation," *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 3

described as the "victor's peace" that draws from the experiences of nations such as Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea where strong leaders that were victorious in war have played a role in the post-conflict reconstruction of their countries through the support of bilateral and multilateral donors such as China. The other is democratic peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction that involved the participation of all parties after wars. This has recently been experienced in the case of South Sudan and Ethiopia through the incorporation of parties in the peacebuilding initiatives. However, it must be noted that the only main initiative that the AU has tried post-conflict reconstruction was in 2003 when the AU Commission created a Ministerial Committee on Sudan to when the present day Sudan and South Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This is a finding that establishes that the AU has been at the forefront in fostering peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

The above scholarly findings indicate that the AU and its agencies or programs such as NEPAD have played a critical role in ensuring that peace prevails in almost all parts of the continent. In East Africa and the larger Horn of Africa, it has been established that the peace efforts have borne fruits in the maintenance of peace and stability in countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The result is that the region has experienced a relative level of stability and security that is required for development and peaceful coexistence amongst different parties [12]. The AU has also engaged bilateral and multilateral donors such as China in ensuring that the much needed peace prevails to ensure proper governance and development of nations.

Effective peacemakers must appreciate the perspectives of others, communicate in ways that reduce conflict, and grasp the historical, cultural, economic, and structural, as well as the impersonal conditions, that ease or exacerbate conflicts. They acquire skills to help forge just, non-violent, and transformative responses to relational, local, regional, and global problems.

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research methodology that will be used in answering the research question. It also sets out theoretical framework that underpins the study or fulfilling its objectives. Besides, it demonstrates how the data will be collected and analyzed until the study is completed.

Research Design

The research design is critical and refers to the framework of the research methods and techniques that a researcher applies to conduct the study. It enables the researcher to sharpen the research methods in a way that is suitable for the subject matter while at the same time setting up the study for ultimate success. In essence, the research design is the guide and blueprint for fulfilling the objectives and answering the set research questions [13]. It is also agreeable that descriptive research determines and reports the findings such as characteristics and values amongst others. Further, the descriptive research design includes a set of methods and procedures that are applied in describing the variables. Whenever the descriptive variables are used, it will answer questions about what, who, where and how.

The present research will apply the descriptive design methodology with the objective of evaluating the role played by the AU and by extension NEPAD in peacebuilding and resolving conflicts that may or have occurred in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. It is a qualitative research study that relies on secondary data that is obtained from books, scholarly articles and reports amongst others. The research questions are found to be effectively addressed by the qualitative approach. The qualitative method that will be adopted in the present study is mainly based on enquiry by answering questions about "why' and "how." It has been selected because it provides unique insights within a specific context or social situation. Due to its approach, the qualitative design that is used in this research is subjective rather than being objective. Moreover, the findings will be gathered under a written format.

CASE STUDY

According to Yin, the case study methodology is used to describe, explore or explain events and phenomena in their usual contexts in which they happen [14]. This can then assist in understanding or explaining the causal links that result from the policy initiative or developments. The significance of the case study approach as used in the present scenario is that it will aid in capturing information on questions such as "how", "what" and "why" as well as "how" the intervention is being used or implemented and received by the targeted parties. Additionally, the case study approach has been selected because it will offer more insights in the gaps that exist in its delivery. Further, it explores the implementation strategy that might be selected over another method.

(March 2019): 354–79, https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2019.1583559.
[12] Martin R. Doornbos, *Beyond Conflict in the Horn: Prospects for Peace, Recovery, and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Sudan* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1992).

[13] Donald R Cooper and Pamela S Schindler, *Business Research Methods*, 12th ed. (New York, Ny: Mcgraw-Hill Education, 2014).
[14] Robert K Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc, 2018).

The case study methodology is selected in providing insights on how the AU and NEPAD have been actively involved in the maintenance of peace and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. Researchers often apply the bounded theory approach that restricts the case study with regards to space and time. However, conducting the case study requires that the researcher draws on the different sources of data. These are mainly scholarly publications including books, peer-reviewed articles, reports and publications on the role of the AU and NEPAD in maintaining peace in the selected region including East Africa and the Horn of Africa. It is only after the collection of this data that the researcher will analyze them to point out common and critical trends.

Theoretical Framework

The research is based on the theory that attaining peace or resolution of conflicts would require that third party actors such as the AU and NEPAD must be aware of the components of peacebuilding. It is premised on the idea that peace is a fundamental connection between at least two collecting points. It may exist in human beings, a state or country, area or progress that pulls in different bearings. The basis of the role of third party actors in peacebuilding by institutions such as AU and NEPAD is thus connected to the components that are discussed above. Therefore, successful peacebuilding and resolution of conflicts depends more on the ability of these actors to accomplish these components.

The study will focus more on three components of peacebuilding that AU is known for. It includes sustainable peace that is aimed at reconciling opposing parties and addressing the underlying structures that support violence. It will also evaluate the critical social issues that play a role in creating conflicts. This theoretical framework can then be used to establish the role of the AU and NEPAD as a third-party actor in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

Significance of Research

There is a challenge of systematically evaluating the peace building impacts of international interventions i.e. projects, programs and policy which has begun to attract the attention of researchers, practitioners and policy makers. This research seeks to stimulate and sharpen critical discussions of the various ways that the AU and EPAD may support the cultivation of peaceful relations within the ethnically divided society of the East Africa and Horn of Africa regions.

The Horn of Africa and East Africa are some of the regions that experience systematic conflicts that must be addressed. This provides the basis and need for the AU and NEPAD to play a role in peacebuilding and resolution of conflicts. The literature review about the topic has evaluated scholarly articles and books about the role of these institutions in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the region to a large extent with diverse findings. The international components of the institutions that mandate them to play the roles have been an important factor from which they draw legitimacy.

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